

**Family Ministries  
Online  
PM 715Z**

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Elective: *Three credit hours.*

**Please be sure to read and familiarize yourself with ALL content in this syllabus and in the online classroom.**

Welcome to the course, **Family Ministries**. Although I can't give you a personal welcome, as I might do in my on-campus course, I do want to welcome you warmly to this vital learning experience. I want this course to be a significant and vital part of your seminary education. You are one of many students taking advantage of the alternative delivery of high quality theological education through our EDEN distance learning network. Please visit the online classroom at <http://eden.erskineseminary.net/>. Alternatively, if you are on campus, feel free to stop by my office in Reid Hall, room 14. I am available when you need me because we aren't limited by office hours or distance. I look forward to getting to know you better as we progress through the course materials. Anytime you experience difficulty or have a question about course content or course requirements, please use one of the communication means identified above to reach me. I pray God's wisdom as you expose yourself to the study of his Word.

### Mission Statement

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to "educate persons for service in the Christian Church."

### Course Description

The church's ministry and potential for ministry to families, for families, with families, and by families are all considered in this practical course. A particular focus is on ways the local church can use its existing programs to strengthen and support families, especially in the important task of faith sharing with children and young people.

### Course Objectives

1. Expose students to the current state of family life in the United States and will be able to identify current trends and interpret their significance for family-based church ministry.
2. Articulate students' own understanding of the biblical-theological basis for family ministry in the church.
3. Identify the central tenets of a biblically-based and sociologically sensitive model of family ministry.
4. Be able to equip Christian parents with basic abilities that will enable them to facilitate the spiritual formation of their children.
5. Introduce students to a variety of viewpoints and opinions within the Christian community regarding the definition of family and how family ministry should be carried out in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Course Resources

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

You may use [Erskine Seminary's Virtual Bookstore](#) to order your textbooks for this course.

*Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*, Diana R. Garland. InterVarsity Press, 1999. [Center For Family and Community Ministries Baylor University](#).

*Tending the Flock: Congregations and Family Ministries*, K. Brynoff Lyon and Archie Smith, Jr. (eds). Westminster John Knox, 1998.

*Nurturing Faith in Families: 425 Creative Ideas for Family Ministry*, Jolene L. Roehlkepartain. Abingdon Press, 2002. [Jolene's husband, Eugene Roehlkepartain was our 2006 Robinson Lecturer for the Spring Conference.]

Click on the links below for information relevant to seminary policies

[Writing Theological Papers](#)

[Style & Form Standards](#)

## Course Grading Criteria and Scale

I will use the following criteria to assess student work for this course. In order for a student to earn an "A" for course work submitted, it must reflect exceptional skill and mastery above the minimum requirement of fulfilling the assignment as stipulated in the course syllabus.

*A Level Work = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals,*

*and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.*

*B Level Work = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.*

*C Level Work = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.*

*D Level Work = Inadequate and unexceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; insufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and an unsatisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.*

## Course FAQs

1. All assignments must be submitted via e-mail attachment to the professor and uploaded to the online classroom where indicated.
2. Please use Microsoft Word when submitting assignments electronically.
3. All assignments should be clearly marked on the e-mail subject line with the student's last name and assignment number.

## COURSE PLATFORM

Erskine Seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). According to the ATS Standard 10.3.4.3, "Institutions shall ensure that distance education programs provide appropriate opportunity for collaboration, personal development, interaction among peers within a community of learning, and supervised field or internship opportunities when appropriate to the degree program." It is with this stipulation that EDEN has implemented a web-based learning platform which will serve to provide a number of collaborative learning experiences. The learning platform is Moodle and according to their website, "Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses . . . and create effective online learning communities." You will be provided with additional information concerning Moodle tutorials, site information, and the peer mentoring program. In order to meet the online discussion component of this course, you will need:

- A computer (or access to a computer)
- High-speed access to the Internet

## Course Components

**The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through four learning sequences. See the information listed below for more information.**

1. E-lectures
2. Community building
3. Reading and reaction papers
4. Final project

## Course Learning Experiences

### Sequence One: E-lectures

Watch all the course videos following the Module sequence provided in the online classroom

### Sequence Two: Community building

Respond to the Going Deeper discussion questions posed by the instructor **and** respond to at least one other student's posting as well. This must be done on a weekly basis. Retroactive postings will not be accepted.

The learning environment for this course will be built upon the assumptions of adult learning theory as espoused in the andragogical model of Dr. Malcolm Knowles and upon the biblical/theological premise of the priesthood of all believers. In practice, this means that the course will be highly interactive, collaborative, and participatory. This dimension of adult teaching and learning will be experienced through your online participation in the *Going Deeper* sections for each week.

- You are expected to respond to each *Going Deeper* question or issue in the appropriate place in the online classroom for this course.
- You are also expected to respond to other students and what they have written.

Each week I will have a different question/problem posed in the *Going Deeper* section of the online classroom. The question/problem will be generated by the content of that week's topic. Each student is expected to post a series of responses and reactions to my question as well as the comments of other students in the class. I will also invite outside guest responders from the Erskine faculty, church leaders, or professionals in the field of Christian Education to join us in our deliberations. Part of your grade for the course will be tied to the quantity and quality of your postings and comments.

### Sequence Three: Read and react

- React and respond to your reading of each text by identifying three family ministry principles and three practical family ministry ideas that you thought were significant from your reading of the text.
- Be sure to elaborate on each principle and each family ministry idea.

- The reaction paper for each text should run between 3-5 pages in length. You will upload one copy to the space provided in each Module in the online classroom and you will send a copy via email attachment to the professor.
- After you are finished writing your critical reaction to each book you will post your written work to the online classroom\*.
- You are to read the critical reaction of one other student in the course and provide feedback (unless you are the only student taking the course). This too you will post in the online classroom.
  - You will need to submit three (3) critical reactions and you will need to read and respond to three (3) critical reactions written by other students. When you respond to another student's work, do NOT just say how good it was or how much you enjoyed reading it. I want you to engage in a virtual conversation with the other student and push back on comments, assertions, assumptions, and assessments made by the student. I expect this to be a vigorous exchange of opinion and analysis.

\* Steps to upload your assignment:

1. Find the "Memo Depot" discussion forum in the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find assignment listed there.
3. Click on "Add a new discussion topic" and this will take you to the upload area
4. Type in your name and reaction paper title (i.e. Joe Smith's Memo paper) in the subject line.
5. Type a BRIEF explanation in the message section (i.e. Memo)
6. Click on the "browse" feature at the bottom of that paper and find your paper.
7. Double-click on your document and select "post to forum" shown at the bottom of the screen.

Steps to download (or read) others' assignment:

1. Find the "Memo Depot" discussion forum in the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find student postings listed there.
3. Click on the title of the student posting listed under Discussion.
4. Click on the Word document in that posting.
5. Select "open" to read the document instantly or "save" to save the document to your desktop folder.
6. Post your comments related to the paper by hitting "reply" on the discussion board. Enter your comments in message section. Hit "post to forum" when finished.

## Sequence Four: Final project

1. Using all of the required texts as well as any additional resources you identify on your own, produce a 10-15 page Family Ministry Plan for a Local Church. The plan should cover the following topics: (1) mission focus and biblical rationale (2) family ministry program components (3) organization and administration of the family ministry program including

ministry descriptions for each position (4) stated objectives for the program and some means of assessing the accomplishing of these objectives as well as the effectiveness of the ministry components. Be sure to cover all ministry program components in the assessment process.

**OR you may choose**

2. Produce a series of four (4) sermons on the family. Each sermon must fit within a 20-30 minute sermon delivery timeframe. Write out each sermon in full complete with illustrations, if you use them. The first sermon must address the place of the family in the Mission of God. The second sermon must focus on one particular family in the Bible from which you draw principles and lessons for contemporary application to Christian families. The other two sermons can be topics of your choice related to the family in the Bible or to family ministry in general. The total number of pages should run between 15-20 pages of 1.5 line spacing and 12 point font.

**Upload all assignments to the online classroom as well as send me an email attachment. Be sure to put your name and course on the memo line of the email.**

**Course Schedule**

**LEARNING MODULE #1**

Students should complete all work for Learning Module One by the last day of the first month of the semester.

Week	Lectures to view	Assignments Due
1	Lecture 1 Lecture 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Begin reading <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Read article on Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Post a response to <i>Going Deeper</i> for this module</li> <li>• Begin reading <i>Tending the Flock</i></li> <li>• Begin working on Critical Reaction Paper 1</li> </ul>
2	Lecture 3 Lecture 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Tending the Flock</i></li> <li>• Read the following article (found online)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Critical Thinking</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Don't forget to post a response to <i>Going Deeper</i></li> <li>• Begin working on Critical Reaction Paper 1</li> </ul>
3	Lecture 5 Lecture 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Tending the Flock</i></li> <li>• Read the following article (found online)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>The Church in the Home</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you haven't done so yet, post a response to <i>Going Deeper</i></li> <li>• Begin working on Critical Reaction Paper 1</li> </ul>
4	Lecture 7 Lecture 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Read the following article (found online) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>The Family in the Bible</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interact with course content by looking at PowerPoint presentation</li> <li>• <b>Critical Reaction Paper to <i>Tending the Flock</i> due</b></li> <li>• Post a response to <i>Reaction Paper 1</i></li> </ul>

## LEARNING MODULE #2

Students should complete all work for Learning Module Two by the end of the second month of the semester

Week	Lectures to view	Assignments Due
5	Lecture 9 Lecture 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Begin reading <i>Nurturing Faith in Families</i></li> <li>• Post a response to <i>Going Deeper</i> for this module</li> </ul>
6	Lecture 11 Lecture 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Nurturing Faith in Families</i></li> <li>• Don't forget to post a response to <i>Going Deeper</i></li> </ul>
7	Lecture 13 Lecture 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Nurturing Faith</i></li> <li>• Read the following article (found online) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>The Family Life Cycle</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Have you posted a response to <i>Going Deeper</i>?</li> <li>• Begin working on Critical Reaction Paper to <i>Nurturing Faith</i></li> </ul>
8	Lecture 15 Lecture 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Continue reading <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Finish reading <i>Nurturing Faith in Families</i></li> <li>• Read the following article (found online) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Building Strong Families Research Report</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Submit your Critical Reaction to <i>Nurturing Faith in Families</i>. Upload a copy to the online classroom and send one as an email attachment to the professor.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post a response to another student's Critical Reaction to Nurturing Faith in Families (if applicable)</li> </ul>
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### LEARNING MODULE #3

**Students should complete all work for the third component by the last day of the third month of the semester.**

Week	Lectures to view	Assignments Due
9	Lecture 17 Lecture 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Finish reading <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Read the following article (found online) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>American Family Strengths Inventory</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Begin working on Critical Reaction to <i>Family Ministry</i></li> <li>• Post a response to <i>Going Deeper</i> for this module</li> <li>• Begin working on Final Project</li> </ul>
10	Lecture 19 Lecture 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Begin working on your final Critical Reaction to Family Ministry</li> <li>• Watch the video excerpt (found online) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Let's Get Married</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Continue working on Final Project</li> </ul>
11	Lecture 21 Lecture 22 Lecture 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with course content by viewing e-lectures</li> <li>• Read <i>Nurturing</i></li> <li>• Don't forget to post a response to <i>Going Deeper</i></li> <li>• Continue working on Critical Reaction Paper 3</li> <li>• Continue working on Final Project</li> </ul>
12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit your Critical Reaction Paper to Family Ministry</li> <li>• Post a response to <i>Reaction Paper 3</i></li> <li>• Final Project due during Finals Week</li> </ul>

### Relevant Institutional and Class Policies

**Conduct in Theological Discussions:** Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a

context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.

**Language about God and Humanity:** Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

**Late or Incomplete Work:** The grade of "I" or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he/she will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his/her final grade report. An "I" in any course must be removed by March 1 for the Fall Term, April 1 for the January Term, August 1 for the Spring Term, and November 1 for the Summer Term. Only the Dean may grant extensions of incompletes beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grades automatically become "F." The Seminary imposes a fee for Incomplete grades to the student's account.

**Drop/Add/Withdrawal:** Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a "drop/add" form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. As the following statement indicates, plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and integrity of the Christian community:

Occurrences of plagiarism shall be considered 'documented' when the instructor is able to produce documentary evidence that plagiarism has occurred, and when the instructor has reason to believe that the plagiarism was motivated by a deliberate attempt to receive credit for ideas or work not the student's own. Where such plagiarism involves the theft of the academic work of another student, whether at Erskine or any other institution, it shall be designated 'documented theft of another student's work.'

The instructor involved, in consultation with the Dean, may recommend measures deemed appropriate. In cases of documented plagiarism or documented theft of another student's work, the offending student will automatically receive the following penalties:

- Failure of the course(s) in which plagiarized or stolen work is submitted
- Dismissal from the Seminary for a minimum of one semester
- Forfeiture of the right to tuition refunds during the semester(s) affected

Before such penalties are imposed, a committee of at least three faculty members must agree that they are appropriate to the case. Appeals in such cases may only be addressed, in writing, to the President of Erskine College and Theological Seminary.

## **Select Family Ministry Annotated Bibliography**

*Family Ministry* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Charles M. Sell. Zondervan, 1995.

This is a comprehensive textbook on family ministry, written by one of the leading experts in the field of family ministry. It will provide you with a broad overview of family ministry and will serve as a useful resource in present and future ministry.

*The Family Friendly Church*, Ben Freudenburg and Rick Lawrence. Vital Ministry (a division of Group Publishing), 1998.

This little book will provide practical suggestions for staffing a family ministry, surveying the congregation for family-related needs, and will present a case for shifting the church ministry paradigm that makes our Christian homes the center of faith formation.

*The Complete Handbook for Family Life Ministry in the Church*, Don W. Hebbard. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.

This book is included in the required lineup because it provides students with essential information about how to conduct a family life survey of your church and how to implement the findings of the survey in your derived model of family ministry.

All of these books may be purchased at the Erskine Bookstore or online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)

*On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family*, Ray S. Anderson and Dennis B. Guernsey. Eerdmans, 1985.

Out of print but classic treatment of the family from a Christian perspective that seeks to integrate theology and sociology.

*A New Day for Family Ministry*, Richard P. Olson and Joe H. Leonard, Jr. Alban Institute, 1996.

A thorough treatment of the subject from a more theologically liberal point of view that seeks to view the family inclusively.

*Family-Friendly Ideas Your Church Can Do*, Ben F. Freudenburg and Rick Lawrence. Vital Ministry, 1998.

Chock full of a wide variety of ideas that your church can implement that support and affirm families.

*The Christian Educator's Handbook on Family Life Education*, Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (editors). Baker, 1998.

A theologically conservative take on family life ministry in the local church with contributions from a variety of authors and family life experts.

*Church and Family Together: A Congregational Manual for Black Family Ministry*, Karen Jones Bernstine (editor). Judson Press, 1996.

A must read for those serving African-American churches who need to have the unique concerns of minority families addressed as the central focus of the work.

*Building Up Zion's Walls: Ministry for Empowering the African-American Family*, James C. Perkins, Jean Alicia Elster (editors). Judson Press, 1999.

A practical blueprint for developing a more powerful family ministry for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home*, Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick. Baker Book House, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1999.

An excellent text on the family from a broadly evangelical Christian perspective that integrates theology, ethics and biblical studies with the social sciences and a clinical perspective based on their many years as a counseling team.

*The Family in Theological Perspective*, Stephen C. Barton. T & T Clark, 1996.

This book brings together a broad range of theological disciplines, including biblical interpretation, patristics, early modern history, ecclesiology, liturgy, and ethics with which to examine the family from a theological perspective.

*Families in Ancient Israel*, Leo G. Perdue et al. Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

This book provides a comprehensive overview of the family that makes use of contemporary social-scientific methodology, archaeological data, and contemporary biblical scholarship to demonstrate the connection between the social reality of the family and Israelite and Jewish understandings of God, Israel, the world, and ethics.

*Faith Traditions and the Family*, Phyllis D. Airhart and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth (eds). Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

Various contributors from diverse religious traditions show how their respective traditions have responded to changes in the family in the last half century.

*Family Ministry*, Gloria Durka and Joanmarie Smith. Harper: San Francisco, 1983.

*God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundations*, Andreas J. Kostenberger. Crossway Books, 2004.

This book provides a comprehensive exposition of the relevant scriptural texts and addresses many of the thorniest issues facing marriage and the family.